

Gwyneth Walker

SWEET LAND
(of Liberty)

Variations on "My Country 'Tis of Thee"
for String Orchestra

*Commissioned by the Abbot Academy Association
in celebration of the 350th Anniversary
of the Town of Andover, Massachusetts 1646-1996*

dedicated to Robert and Susan Lloyd -- cherished Musicians and Teachers

*Premiere Performance:
The Academy Chamber Orchestra – William Thomas, conductor
Cochran Chapel -- Phillips Academy – Andover, Massachusetts
October 25, 1996*

Duration: 6 minutes

Program Notes

The words for "My Country 'Tis of Thee" were written by Reverend Samuel Francis Smith in the town of Andover, Massachusetts in 1831. And today, "America House" still stands proudly in commemoration of this patriotic verse. Thus, it is especially appropriate to use this song for the celebration of Andover's 350th anniversary.

Sweet Land takes the original melody and elaborates it within a 20th-century American musical language. This work might be described as a contemporary excursion based on a historical source. Elements of folk, jazz, blues and rock styles can be heard throughout.

The formal structure is a theme and four variations -- Theme (stately), Variation I (lively), Variation II (in a 'blues' style), Variation III ('furtively') and Variation IV (triumphantly). And although the theme is transformed to the limits of recognition in the 'blues' section, it reappears more noticeably in the 'furtive' motives and asserts itself forcefully at the end.

*The intention in creating **Sweet Land** was to bring renewed energy and affection to a song which has endured for centuries as part of our American heritage.*

Notes About the Composer

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, Walker resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E.C. Schirmer of Boston (choral & vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral & instrumental music).

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council. Chandler Hall, Randolph, VT in June, 2003.

Sweet Land (of Liberty)

Variations on "My Country 'Tis of Thee" for String Orchestra

Gwyneth Walker

Stately ♩ = 84

Musical score for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Bass, measures 1-8. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked "Stately" with a quarter note equal to 84. The dynamics are marked *mf* for all instruments.

Musical score for Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Bass, measures 9-14. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps. The tempo changes from *rit.* (rhythmic) to *a tempo*. The dynamics are marked *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco). The measures are numbered 9 through 14.

Musical score for Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Bass, measures 15-20. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps. The tempo is marked *rit.* (rhythmic) and then **A** much faster, with energy ♩ = 132. The dynamics are marked *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The measures are numbered 15 through 20.

B Variation I

22

Musical score for measures 22-27. The score is for a string quartet (Violins, Viola, Violoncello, Bass) in A major. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The first violin part starts with a rest in measure 22 and enters in measure 23 with a melodic line marked *mf* lightly. The second violin part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, alternating between *mf* and *p*. The viola and cello parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment, with the cello marked *mf* and the viola marked *p*. The bass part plays a simple eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mf* lightly.

28

Musical score for measures 28-34. The first violin part continues its melodic line, marked *mf* lightly. The second violin part has a more active role, with a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*. The viola part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*. The cello part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*, with a section marked *div.* (divisi) in measure 32. The bass part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*, with a section marked *arco* in measure 32 and *pizz.* (pizzicato) in measure 34. Dynamics include *mf* lightly, *p*, *mf*, *unis.*, *div.*, *arco*, and *pizz.*

35 **C**

Musical score for measures 35-40. The first violin part continues its melodic line, marked *mf*. The second violin part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*. The viola part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*. The cello part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*. The bass part has a melodic line marked *p* and *mf*. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mf*.

Variation II

G

75

Vlns. *mf* "blues" style

"blues" style *mf*

Vla.

Vlc.

Variation II

Vlns. *p* pizz. *sf* arco 3

Vla. *p* pizz. *sf* arco 3

Vlc. *sf* pizz. *p* arco 3

Bass *sf* pizz. *p* arco 3

H

79

Vlns.

"blues" style *p* *mf*

"blues" style *mf*

Vla.

Vlc.

H

Vlns. *p* pizz. *sf* arco 3

Vla. *p* pizz. *sf* arco 3

Vlc. *p* pizz. *sf* arco 3

Bass *p* pizz. *sf* arco 3

I

rapidly

Vlns. *mf* 3 *rapidly* *p*

Soli

Vla. *p* *mf* 3 *p* *mf* 3

Vlc. *p* *mf* 3 3 3

I

Vlns. *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* 3 3 *pizz.* *arco*

Vla. *p* *sf* 3 *p* *sf* 3 *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* 3 3

Vlc. *p* *sf* 3 *p* *sf* 3 *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* 3 3

Bass *p* *sf* 3 *p* *sf* 3 *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* 3 3

J

Vlns. *mf* 3 3

Soli

Vla. *p* *mf* 3 3

Vlc. *p* *mf* 3 3 3

J

Vlns. *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* 3 3 *pizz.* *arco*

Vla. *p* *sf* 3 *p* *sf* 3 *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* 3 3

Vlc. *p* *sf* 3 *p* *sf* 3 *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* 3 3

Bass *sf* 3 *p* *sf* 3 *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* 3 3

91 K

Soli

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

K

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

Bass

Solo pizz. *mf*

L

95

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

mf pizz. arco

L

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

Bass

(p) *mf* *mf* *mf* *p* *p* *p* *p*

div. unis. pizz. arco

Sweet Land (of Liberty)

8 99 **M**

Soli

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

M

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

Bass

103 **N**

Soli

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

N

Vlins.

Vla.

Vlc.

Bass

Sweet Land (of Liberty)

gradual rit.

Soli

Vlins. *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p*

Vlc. *p*

gradual rit.

Vlins. *mf* *f* *mf*

Vla. *mf* *f* *mf*

Vlc. *mf* *f* *mf*

Bass *mf* *f* *mf*

div. 8

Soli

Vlins. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Vlins. *p* div. *p*

Vla. *p* div. *p*

Vlc. *p* unis. *p*

Bass *p* *p*

fingertips on body of instrument

Variation III

114 O ♩ = 108

Soli Vlns. *pp*

Variation III

114 O ♩ = 108

Vlns. *pp* *furtively* pizz.

Vla. *pp* *furtively* pizz.

Vlc. *pp* *furtively* pizz.

Bass

(Solo Viola rejoins tutti here)

(Solo Cello rejoins tutti here)

119 P

Soli Vlns.

119 P

Vlns. *f* (pizz.)

Vla. *f* (pizz.)

Vlc. *f*

Bass

124 Q

Soli Vlns. *mp*

Vlns. *p*

Vla. *p* (pizz.) arco

Vlc. *p* (pizz.) arco

Bass *p* arco

128 R

Soli Vlns. *mf*

Vlns. *p* arco

Vla. *mf* (arco) *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

Bass *mf*

S

(Solo Violins rejoin tutti here)

132 arco

T

136

140

143 U

Vlns. *f* *mf*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

Bass *f*

146

Vlns. non div. *f* *mf*

Vla.

Vlc.

Bass

Variation IV

V Triumphantly (♩ = 108)

149

Vlns. *f* *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

Bass *f*

153

W

Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Bass. Measures 153-156. The score features a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 6/4 time signature. Measures 153 and 154 contain triplets in the upper staves. Measure 155 includes a 'W' marking above the first violin staff. Measure 156 features a triplet in the first violin staff.

157

Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Bass. Measures 157-160. The score continues with the same key signature and time signature. Measure 157 has a triplet in the first violin staff. Measure 158 has triplets in the first and second violin staves. Measure 159 has a triplet in the first violin staff. Measure 160 has a triplet in the first violin staff and a sharp sign (#) above the first violin staff.

161

X

Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Bass. Measures 161-164. The score continues with the same key signature and time signature. Measure 161 has a triplet in the first violin staff. Measure 162 has a triplet in the first violin staff. Measure 163 has a triplet in the first violin staff and a 'div.' marking above the cello staff. Measure 164 has a triplet in the first violin staff and a sharp sign (#) above the first violin staff.

165 *rit.*

Vlns. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vlc. *ff*

Bass *ff*

a tempo, or faster

Y *with energy* (♩ = 108 → 120)

169 *slap pizz.*

Vlns. *slap pizz. f*

Vla. *slap pizz. f*

Vlc. *sfp*

Bass *slap pizz. f*

172

Vlns. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

Bass *f*